United Nations A/66/727

General Assembly

Distr.: General
5 March 2012

Original: English

Sixty-sixth session
Agenda items 19 and 27

Sustainable development

Social development

Letter dated 29 February 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you information on the international conference on fostering a well educated and intellectually advanced generation in Uzbekistan as the key factor for sustainable development (see annex).

I would highly appreciate it if you would circulate the attached information as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 19 and 27.

(*Signed*) Murad **Askarov**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan

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Annex to the letter dated 29 February 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

The Harmoniously Developed Generation — a decisive force in national sustainable development

At the initiative of President Islam Karimov, an international conference on fostering a well educated and intellectually advanced generation as the key factor for sustainable development and modernization in Uzbekistan was held in Tashkent on 17 February 2012.

The event was attended by some 1,000 representatives of major international organizations and financial institutions, including the United Nations, the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and the Islamic Development Bank, as well as senior education system officials and scientists and specialists from 48 countries worldwide including the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, China, the United States of America, South Korea, Japan and Russia.

Since independence, Uzbekistan has chosen its own path for development — a path of fundamental reforms directed towards the construction of a democratic State, a socially oriented market economy and a robust civil society. Fostering a harmoniously developed generation of physically, spiritually and intellectually healthy and well-rounded youth has become a key priority of post-independence policy.

In his statement at the opening of the international event, President Karimov emphasized that the achievement of the noble goals placed before the people of Uzbekistan, namely the country's future, its well-being, prosperity and the place it will occupy in the international community in the twenty-first century, depends first and foremost on the new generation, on what sort of people our children become.

In the light of these tasks, which derive from the demands of the country's democratic and market transformations, there has been fundamental reform of the education and vocational training systems. The development of a legislative framework has provided a sound basis for this process. As the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan asserts the right of every individual to an education, the State guarantees free general education. A new stage of fundamental reform in this crucial sphere began with the adoption of an Education Act and a national training programme. Education in Uzbekistan was proclaimed by law to be a priority area for development, satisfying the economic, social, scientific, technological and cultural demands of the individual, society and the State.

In his address, Haruhiko Kuroda, President of the Asian Development Bank, praised the success of Uzbekistan's social and human development. Rational and timely investment in education produces economic growth and benefits society. The Uzbek model of education takes account of the demands of globalization and ensures that Uzbekistan has an increasingly important role in Asia and the world.

The main distinguishing features of the national programme are its cohesion and its integrated approach, in which the individual, society, the State, continuing

education, science and industry are all part of a single process. The goals of the programme are step-by-step improvement of the education system as a unified structure geared towards producing highly qualified, competitive workers for all economic sectors and spheres of life; effective integration of education, science, industry and the spiritual and moral guidance of youth in keeping with national and universal values; and mutually beneficial international cooperation in training.

Such large-scale challenges are clearly impossible to meet unless the country has sustainable economic development, and unless the individual and the individual's interests are placed first, not just in word, but in deed. In the last five years, Uzbekistan's gross domestic product has grown at an average of 8.5 per cent. This places Uzbekistan among the most dynamically developing economies in the world and enables it to devote an ever-larger amount of resources to the social sphere, including education. Currently, approximately 60 per cent of State budget spending is directed towards these goals.

Detailed information on the national education model and fostering a harmoniously developed young generation was presented at a plenary meeting of the Conference. Implementation of the model involved a fundamental transformation of education not only in form, but in essence, to introduce continuing education. The system thus currently consists of preschool, nine-year general primary/secondary, three-year specialized secondary and vocational, higher and postgraduate education, as well as refresher courses and retraining. Extra-curricular education is also included.

A total of 9,779 general education schools are currently operating in Uzbekistan. Over 8,500 schools, predominantly rural, were built and extensively renovated as part of the State nationwide programme to develop education for 2004-2009; to these ends, 1.4 trillion sum were spent. Efforts to strengthen the material and technical resources of schools are under way, and as a result, urban and rural schoolchildren have been provided with identical conditions. All schools are provided with modern learning equipment, computer classes are held and approximately 96 per cent of schools nationwide are connected to the *ZiyoNet* electronic information network.

Uzbekistan was a leader in transitioning to a system of 12-year compulsory education. The establishment of a specialized secondary and vocational system of education was primarily a response to the country's economic demands, oriented towards competitive production and requiring that youth, having received a basic school education, enter the workforce prepared, specialized and aware of the basic elements of the production process. This task is successfully being accomplished by colleges where young men and women not only develop their knowledge of general disciplines, but promptly acquire trades sought after in the job market. Academic high schools are also important in enabling students, while continuing their general education, to study specific disciplines in greater depth, with an academic perspective. Upon completion of such studies, young specialists possess sufficient levels of knowledge to enter higher education institutions and continue the study of their chosen specialization.

Uzbekistan currently has 1,396 vocational colleges and 141 academic high schools. It is worth noting that such educational institutions can be found even in the most remote regions of the country. Scientific and vocational facilities and laboratories are supplied with modern equipment. Approximately 1.7 million young

men and women are currently studying in these educational institutions. A national classifier of 86 areas of training, 225 professions and 578 specializations sought after in various economic sectors has been developed. Vocational colleges are sponsored by leading industrial national enterprises, which participate in training young professionals to work for them.

State educational standards, academic curriculums — including curriculums using multimedia teaching — and textbooks are developed and put into use for every level of education in Uzbekistan, with care taken to ensure that they are appropriate to current demands. Advanced teaching technology and interactive methods of education are widely used. Every educational institution has its own information and resource centre containing a large assortment of educational literature, including literature in electronic form. Thus, the necessary conditions for acquiring quality, in-depth and all-round knowledge are provided.

Higher education has undergone fundamental reform, with the introduction of a two-tiered structure with bachelor's and master's degrees. Uzbekistan currently has 59 institutions of higher education, 11 regional branches of Tashkent higher education establishments and six branches of leading foreign higher education establishments.

The focus of the national education model on producing well-qualified individuals has been validated by the existence of fruitful international collaboration. The Westminster International University in Tashkent, the Turin Polytechnic University, the Management Development Institute of Singapore, as well as branches of the Lomonosov Moscow State University, the Plekhanov Russian University of Economics and the Gubkin Russian State University of Oil and Gas are producing specialist graduates. The practice of establishing joint faculties and departments with foreign partners is being extended to include the advanced study of foreign languages.

National institutions of higher education are making efforts to integrate education, science and industry. Students, sometimes commissioned by enterprises, are actively participating in academic research and conducting innovative work, the results of which are in demand, as their regular presence at annual fairs exhibiting new technology and high-technology items demonstrates. At the 2011 national fair of innovative ideas, technologies and projects alone, contracts to a value of 3.58 billion sum were signed in connection with the technological research and products developed in institutions of higher education.

Close, mutually beneficial ties have been established with scientific research institutions which steer students towards essential research. This promotes the training of young scientists. At the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan, research and education laboratory facilities for long-term advancement in the key areas of science, engineering and technology are being established within the leading institutions of higher education, with the involvement of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan.

The structure for postgraduate studies is actively being developed. Institutions of higher education have approximately 30 specialized committees to hear the defence of pre-doctoral dissertations in 70 fields and doctoral theses in 37 fields.

An important factor in the long-term development of the education system in Uzbekistan is the 2011-2016 programme for modernizing the material and technical

resources of institutions of higher education and significantly improving the quality of specialist training, established by Presidential Decree. It consists of a series of targeted measures, including the construction, or redesigning and fitting-out of buildings of institutions of higher education, the installation of new modern laboratories, optimizing training and improving education standards.

Spiritual and moral guidance plays an integral role in the harmonious development of the young generation. It is targeted at instilling in young men and women a sense of patriotism, a modern world outlook and a sense of the primacy of national and universal values and the aspiration to help their country.

An essential part of the upbringing of children and youth is active participation in sports, which not only improves health, but builds character, determination and the ability to overcome difficulties. A three-tier system of annual competitions has been established. The *Umid nikhollari* for schools, the *Barkamol Avlod* for students of academic high schools and colleges, and the Universiade (student games). All educational institutions, including those in rural areas, have sports halls and sports centres.

In the years covered by the national professional training programme, competitors from Uzbek schools earned 157 medals, including 29 gold medals, at the international Academic Olympics. Many students of Uzbek institutions of higher education are champions in various disciplines of the International Olympiads. The number of young musicians and artists winning various prestigious international competitions is growing. Young athletes are bringing triumph to their homeland in increasing numbers at the Olympic Games, international and continental championships and other competitions.

Many authoritative international organizations and financial institutions are involved in developing the new training system used in Uzbekistan. A number of large-scale joint projects in all fields of education are being undertaken. One example of this is the large print runs of some 90 titles of teaching material for schools, academic high schools and colleges, as part of investment projects by the Asian Development Bank, the German bank KfW and the Uzbek-Swiss project for the development of professional skills.

In their addresses to the conference, the representative of UN-Women, Noeleen Heyzer, the Rector of the University of Westminster (Great Britain) Geoffrey Petts, the Rector of the Lomonosov Moscow State University, Viktor Sadovnichiy, the President of the Islamic Development Bank, Ahmad Mohamed Ali, the Associate Provost of Webster University (United States of America), Nancy Hellerud, the President of the Management Development Institute of Singapore, Eric Kuan, the President of Hosei University (Japan), Toshio Masuda, the World Bank Director for Strategy and Operations in Europe and Central Asia, Theodore Ahlers and others noted that education is seen as a major factor of progress in the modern world and praised the fundamental reforms undertaken in Uzbekistan in this sphere. Successive reforms undertaken in the country's education system will make a substantial contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

At the close of its work, the international conference adopted an outcome document containing its recommendations.